

# THE SALTSHAKER

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

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## The Ongoing Work of Hurricane Recovery

By Rev. Jim Curtis

Over the past three months, I am sure many of us have seen, done, and learned to do things we never thought we would. The response of the broader Church in Asheville to the effects of Hurricane Helene was swift, decisive, and effective. In particular, the efforts of our own members and diaconate were incredible to witness through our distribution and water stations. We have much to give thanks for to God in giving us such an opportunity to witness to the love of Christ!

Additionally, as I mentioned in my recent sermon in Isaiah, we also give great thanks to God for the broader Church *outside* of Asheville. In these three months, Covenant Reformed specifically has had multiple teams through various connections in addition to the teams MNA's disaster response have been bringing into the area. I want to highlight these individuals and teams for you, so you can know what they (and to a degree, I) have been up to!

In the initial week after the hurricane, CRPC's supply and water distribution was only possible due to the efforts of others. First on that list is Joe Gibbs Racing and their chaplain (and PCA Teaching Elder) Hudson Belk. Hudson reached out to us from Huntersville, NC, on the recommendation of my brother-in-law who works at Gibbs. He planned and executed the effort to bring a racing hauler full of necessary supplies to CRPC by mobilizing the employees, their friends, families, and several local churches to drop off items for donation to WNC. Once they had enough to fill a hauler, Hudson personally came with the driver and Miller Gibbs, the grandson of Joe Gibbs, to unload and help us prepare to distribute. After them came more donations from friends and churches in Waxhaw, Wilmington, Johnson City, TN, and beyond. I do not believe it would be an understatement to suggest that JGR and those who donated goods truly may have saved lives, as runners

took necessary items like water, food, and even fuel to those who had just drunk their last drop of potable water.

All the while, a group of men at Woodruff Road PCA in Greenville, SC, brought up several barrels and those now ubiquitous IBC totes to enable us to offer clean drinking water to the neighborhood. We then were able to set up and supply this station with clean water thanks to Noe McHone with plumbing expertise and Evan Linton with engineering prowess and a seemingly bottomless well. These immediate efforts from Joe Gibbs, Hudson, Woodruff Road PCA, and many others were vital to CRPC becoming a hub for North Asheville. As the weeks went on, and more and more people came to CRPC for supplies and water, the Lord granted us another connection from Woodruff Road to a man named Matt Jefferson, who became the "Water Man," bringing over 1200 gallons of clean drinking water *a day* to our watering station.

As the immediate emergency settled into a recovery phase, three main teams have since come and served CRPC members and neighbors. In November, a group of thirteen men from Ludington, MI, came and were able to accomplish what seems like a month's worth of work in a week. Bringing with them skid steers, a dump trailer, and years of forestry knowledge and experience, the Ludington crew left their mark in a lasting way. The Lord even showed a particular kindness to us in that among the amazing guys who came, a new believer named Alex joined them. At that point, not even a month after the Lord granted him new life in Christ, Alex came down to Asheville burning with the love of Christ to serve and excitedly share the Gospel as he did. Alex, a new brother in the Lord, couldn't wait to not only meet us, but share his love for us in serving the needs inside and outside of our homes.

### January – February

#### Upcoming Events

For more information about any of these events, refer to our website ([www.covenantreformed.net](http://www.covenantreformed.net)), or the church office (828-253-6578; [office@covenantreformed.net](mailto:office@covenantreformed.net)).

#### The Lord's Supper

Please prepare your hearts in advance to take of the sacrament together.

Morning Worship:  
January 5, 12  
February 2, 16

#### Fellowship Meal

January 5

#### Shepherding Groups

February 2

#### Youth Movie Night

January 24

#### Men's Breakfast

January 11  
February 8

#### Weekly Events

**Sunday:**  
Sunday School 9:30 am  
Morning Worship 10:45 am  
Evening Worship 6:00 pm Except on 1st Sunday

#### Bible Study

**For Men:**  
ROMEOS 7:30 am Every Thursday  
(Retired Old Men Eating Out)  
at Cornerstone Restaurant  
Norm Bomer's Home 7:00 pm 1st & 3rd Thursdays

**For Women:**  
Gail Albee's Home 9:30 am Every Tuesday

### Watering Seeds Podcast

Be sure to check out our church's weekly podcast, *Watering Seeds*. Each week our pastors review, discuss, and apply the previous Sunday's sermon. You can find the podcast on any major podcast platform, such as Anchor, Spotify, or Apple Podcast, by searching for our church name or the title, "Watering Seeds," or by scanning the following QR code:



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But the Lord wasn't done yet (and may still not be!). In December, three groups converged on CRPC almost simultaneously, one from Winston-Salem and Redeemer PCA, another from Harrisonburg, VA, and again men from Woodruff Road PCA, to run major equipment to move massive amounts of dirt and material and to assist in the chainsaw work in the area. These men helped us serve a firewood ministry in Waynesville, to replenish the stock of wood for those heating their homes by wood who had lost most or all in the flooding, as well as various neighbors and unbelievers through continued tree services and aid. They also came to the aid of our friends at Fairview Christian Fellowship and their pastor, Trevor Allen, in processing large amounts of logs and clearing areas of damaged, uprooted, and dead trees.

On the topic of Fairview Christian Fellowship and Trevor Allen, I also wanted to highlight the work of Brock Mountain Construction and Jared Dillingham, who have done incredible things for Trevor's neighborhood. In addition to all of the tree damage, a large mud and rock slide had taken out a large section of their road. In their attempts to assess the situation and respond, the residents found that their road was not serviced or overseen by the NCDOT. As a private road, therefore, the residents would need to band together to fix it. Brock Mountain came to their aid by quickly regrading,

reconstructing the road, and clearing downed trees en masse all while needing to complete contracts elsewhere in the state. Praise the Lord for the brothers at Brock Mountain, including Jared, for their Christian approach to loving their neighbors with the tools and expertise God has given them (read more about this project at [www.beartrailproject.org](http://www.beartrailproject.org))

Throughout this time, we have also been well-served by Steven Jessen and the folks from our denomination response ministry, Mission to North America (MNA). They have helped us to identify and triage places of need, conduct site visits, and coordinate teams of volunteers. I cannot imagine how much harder this recovery would have been without them!

This short article does not do these teams and their work justice, though, so let me end with an exhortation to the members of CRPC: as you continue to gather together in one another's' homes to fellowship, encourage, and share with one another, specifically honor these teams by sharing their impact in your lives. Tell of the work they did, not just with their sweat and hands, but with their compassion to desire to do the work for you. Rejoice in the provision of these teams from the Lord together and give thanks to God for his beautiful bride, the Church, both here in Asheville and beyond.

## The Sacred Desk

By Rev. Sean McCann

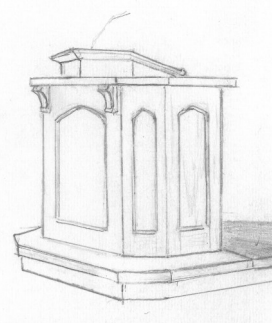
The end of year brings to a head the confluence of several different sermon series, which I want to review here so that we do not forget where we have been or lose track of where we are going.

### Looking Backward

Our predominant morning series in 2024 was through the prophet Isaiah, and we saw how his intertwined themes of judgement and hope called us to examine ourselves and to trust in God alone for salvation. Isaiah detailed different figures in Israel's history (king, servant, messenger) who would all find their true fulfillment in the arrival of Jesus Christ. The prophet ended his message with a series of visions of the New Jerusalem, which led directly into our advent series in the final chapters of Revelation, *The Last Advent*. Outside of these two series, I was able to preach to a small group of you on the Sunday after Hurricane Helene from Psalm 121, a somber occasion to be sure. During the evening services, we worked through Hebrews, and then ended the year with a post-Helen series in the Psalms (Ps. 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84) entitled, *Songs in the Night*. Here we saw how the grief of loss and devastation is met with the persevering hope in a God who listens to and revives his people.

### Looking Forward

As we turn the page to 2025, I plan to preach a brief series on the mission and vision of our church. This will be a first for me, but it seems appropriate to take advantage of a new year to return to first principles and reset our common ministry with the priorities of Scripture. After those first three Sundays we will return to the New Testament for a spring sermon series through 1 Peter. All of Scripture is always relevant, but there is a unique way that Peter speaks to Christians living in a post-Christian context that I find especially helpful and challenging. To prepare for this series I interviewed two friends on their experience preaching through 1 Peter, so be on the lookout for that podcast episode to appear on *Watering Seeds* in the next few weeks. In our evening services we will be returning to Old Testament narrative with a series in 1 Kings. After a year apart from King David (we ended 2 Samuel in 2023), we pick up his story as his life comes to an end and the promised lineage of the kings continues.



### Preaching Schedule

Date	Morning	Evening
Jan. 5	John 4:24	
Jan. 12	Acts 2:42	1 Kings 1:1-37
Jan. 19	Acts 1:8	1 Kings 1:38-53
Jan. 26	1 Peter 1:1-2	1 Kings 2:1-12
Feb. 2	1 Peter 1:3-9	
Feb. 9	1 Peter 1:10-12	1 Kings 2:13-46
Feb. 16	1 Peter 1:13-21	1 Kings 3:1-15
Feb. 23	1 Peter 1:22-25	1 Kings 3:16-28

## Men's Breakfast

By Micaiah Liner

*"This world is full of sorrow because it is full of sin. It is a dark place. It is a lonely place. It is a disappointing place. The brightest sunbeam in it is a friend. Friendship halves our sorrows and doubles our joy."* J.C. Ryle

The Bible is full of repeated themes. Many Christians could name several significant ones, such as: the fall, exile, deliverance, and redemption. However, one that can be easy to overlook is the theme of companionship. Certainly, we know that we are relational creatures. After all, we are created in the image of the triune God, who has eternally had perfect fellowship within himself. In addition to this, we see in the very beginning of the Bible the need for human companionship. God says it is not good for man to be alone, and he lovingly provides Adam a wife—a fellow image-bearer to share life with.

These are fundamental and perhaps obvious parts of the Christian faith. But maybe easier to miss is the broader theme of friendship throughout the pages of scripture. And yet, when we pause to give it some consideration, we quickly recall many examples—David had Jonathan, Naomi had Ruth, Paul had Timothy, even Jesus had those who were especially dear to him. In each of these examples, we can see how friendship is a gift from God, giving strength and encouragement in the face of life's challenges. As J.C. Ryle states, "Friendship halves our sorrows and doubles our joy".

Just as the Bible has its themes, so does our culture. One trope often propagated in commercials, TV shows, and movies is the idea that *men are somehow incapable of deep friendships*. Often, men are depicted awkwardly relating to one another, struggling to "connect". Thanks be to God; this is not his vision for Christian men.

In the new year, the men of CRPC will have a wonderful opportunity for growing in relationship and being encouraged in the faith. Saturday, January 11, will be the first of what will be a monthly Men's Breakfast, occurring the second Saturday of each month. This event is open to all men, those inside the church and out, from the youngest to the oldest. Our hope is men will invite other men, fathers will bring sons, and each generation in the church will have a place to strengthen existing friendships and establish new ones. Each Men's Breakfast gathering will include a free breakfast, time for fellowship, a short message from a guest speaker exploring a variety of topics pertaining to Christian manhood, and a brief time of corporate prayer.

In a culture that promotes hurry and self-sufficiency, we hope these simple gatherings will provide a regular time and place for men to slow down for a few moments and enjoy a good meal, meaningful conversation, and some spiritual encouragement.

So, men, mark your calendars for Saturday, January 11, from 8:00–10:00am and join us for the Men's Breakfast refresh hosted at the church. If you would like more information or would like to volunteer, please contact Tom Voigt at [tom.voigt1@gmail.com](mailto:tom.voigt1@gmail.com) (828) 230-9193.

## Online Church Directory

By David Livernois



If you have not already set up a Breeze account to access our online church directory, I am not sure I will be able to convince you to do so in this article, but I will let you know up front, that's my goal. That said, it is a bit of an ironic goal given the following two things about me. The first, is that if ever presented with the option between an electronic book and an actual paper and ink book, I'll take the print version every time. The second, is that I'm a firm believer we should spend far less time looking at screens, not more. So, why am I so excited about Breeze, a *digital* platform that requires church members to interact with an electronic *screen* in order to use it? Because I also firmly believe that Breeze will be a tremendous blessing to us as we seek to grow together in community as a church body. I especially believe this to be as it applies to the church's inner ministry of nurture, whereby we seek to be a "Spirit-led community that is served by our members and led by our shepherds."

While space doesn't allow for listing all the wonderful ways Breeze can aid us in this as a tool, I do want to highlight how Breeze allows you and me to go far beyond the capabilities of a paper directory. With Breeze, not only are all the familiar features of a traditional directory still available, but each feature is enhanced. Take for instance, one of the features we all love about church directories, putting a face with a name. Now, instead of waiting for the next churchwide initiative to take updated photos of all our members (photos which may or may not turn out that great), members can upload their own pictures and update them as often as they like. In fact, as needed, members can also personally update their phone numbers, email addresses, and mailing address with ease. Additionally, new members who join the church can be added to the directory as soon as they join, rather than having to wait till the next iteration of a paper/pdf directory.

Additionally, when using the Breeze mobile app on your smartphone, looking up a number will give you the option to automatically call it simply by tapping the number. Likewise, when looking up an address, tapping the address will automatically pull it up for you on your phone's GPS. Texting and email? You guessed it, all at the tap of a button from the same screen.

Practically, these features are incredibly helpful for things like taking someone a meal, calling someone to see how they are doing, driving to someone's home for a shepherding group, or simply remembering someone's name as the Lord adds to our number. And that's just for starters.

Lastly, and though I hope it goes without saying, please do not hesitate to call the church office with any and all of your Breeze-related questions; I would love for my role as administrative assistant this year to include "customer support technician" as we learn how to use and navigate our new online directory!